

Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute



**Embracing, Enriching,
and Enabling America**

Hispanic Heritage Month 2016

Hispanic Heritage Month

15 September – 15 October 2016

Each year, we observe National Hispanic Heritage Month from September 15th to October 15th. During this month, we celebrate the histories, cultures, and contributions of American citizens with ancestors from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean, and Central and South America.



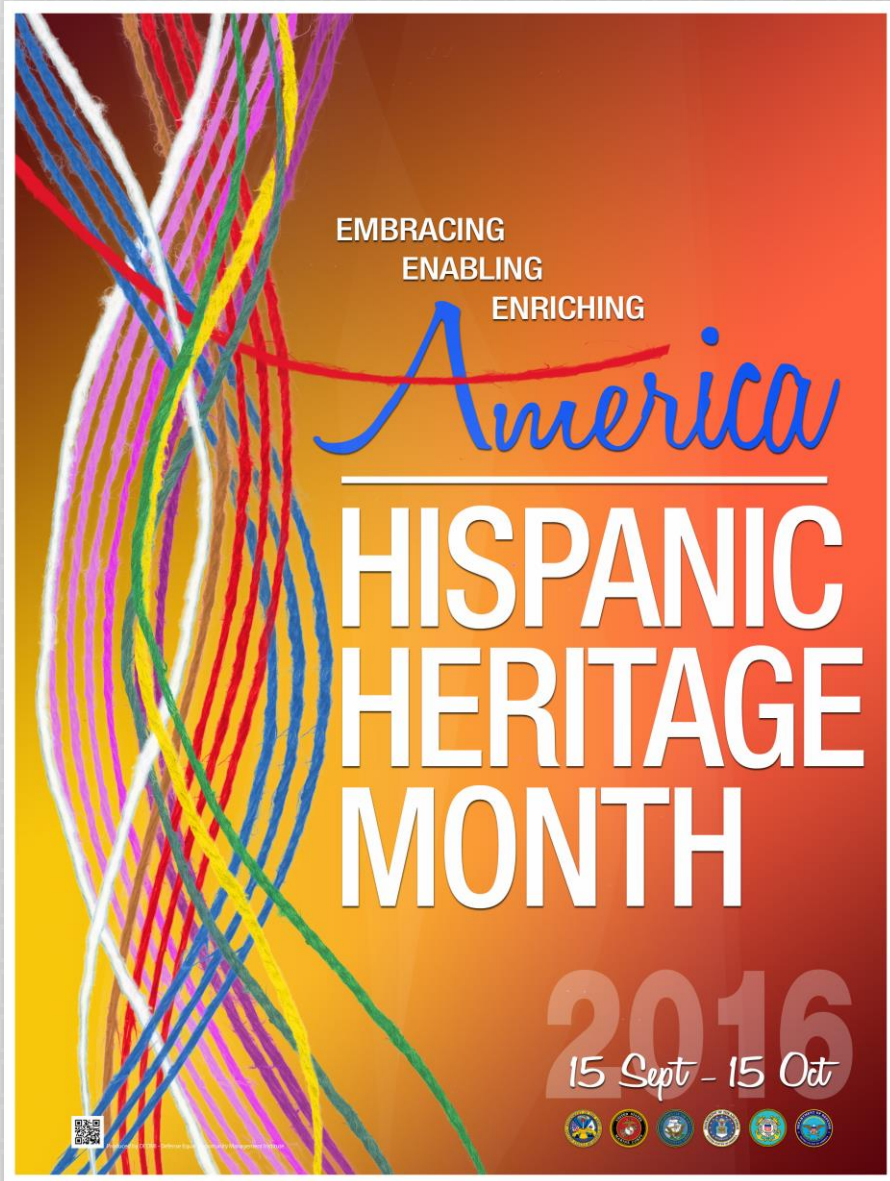
Hispanic Heritage Month

15 September – 15 October 2016

September 15th was chosen as the starting point for Hispanic Heritage Month because it is the anniversary of independence for five Latin American countries—Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua.

In addition, Mexico declared its independence on September 16th, and Chile on September 18th.





This year's theme, chosen by the National Council of Hispanic Employment Managers is: "*Embracing, Enriching, and Enabling America.*"

The winning theme was submitted by Maurice Sanabria, Command Programs Office, Defense Logistics Agency-Aviation, and focuses on three elements.

Hispanic Heritage Month

Embracing

Hispanics and Hispanic-Americans still look at the United States of America as the great beacon of hope; the land of opportunity; and a place where anyone with determination, self-discipline, and hard work can achieve his/her goals. We embrace the ideals that founded this nation. We believe in the American Dream, in self-determination, in liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Hispanic Heritage Month

Hispanics and Hispanic-Americans not only embrace America and its culture but we also bring our own traditions, culture, language, values, work ethic and ideals to the great American table. We enrich this culture through diversity, hard work, compassion, passion, and an unwavering commitment to make this country better than it already is.

Enriching

Hispanic Heritage Month

Enabling

Hispanics and Hispanic-Americans make contributions in many fields that enable the greatness of America. Our contributions to the defense of this nation, the arts, sports, public service, research and development, non-profit organization management, civil rights, politics, business, agriculture, and the service industry enable America to maintain its competitiveness, relevance, and position in the global landscape as the leader of the free world.

Hispanic Heritage Month



America's diversity has always been one of our nation's greatest strengths. Hispanic Americans have long played an integral role in America's rich culture, proud heritage, and the building of this great nation.

This year's theme invites us to reflect on Hispanic Americans' not only embracing America and its culture but also bringing their own traditions, culture, language, values, work ethics and ideals to the vitality and meaningful legacy in our Nation's cultural framework.

Hispanic Heritage Month

This presentation recognizes five Hispanic-Americans who have woven their talents and legacies into the fabric of our nation.



David Bennes
Barkley

Luis Alvarez



Dolores Heurta

Alfred Rascon



Angela Salinas

Hispanic Heritage Month



David Bennes Barkley joined the U.S. Army in 1916 at age 17, and was sent to France during World War I.

On November 9, 1918, Barkley and a fellow soldier, Private Harold Johnson, volunteered to swim across the Meuse River in order to locate enemy positions.

David Bennes Barkley

Hispanic Heritage Month

Barkley and Johnson successfully reached the opposite bank of the freezing river and gathered intel. However, upon returning to the American side, Barkley was seized with cramps and drowned.

In 1919, Barkley was posthumously awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor, the Croix de Guerre from France, and the Croce Merito de Geurra from Italy for his courageous actions.

In 1989, he was recognized by the U.S. Army as its first Hispanic Medal of Honor recipient.



Hispanic Heritage Month



Luis Alvarez

Among an abundance of his scientific discoveries that changed the world, Nobel Prize winner, Luis Alvarez, along with his son Walter, proposed a theory in 1980 to explain what triggered the extinction of the dinosaurs.

His theory states that an asteroid the size of San Francisco slammed into Earth 65 million years ago. The tremendous impact set off earthquakes greater than 11.0 on the Richter scale and caused black clouds of debris and smoke to culminate in the atmosphere, where they lingered for years.

Hispanic Heritage Month

For 30 years, a controversy bubbled over whether the mass extinction was caused by an asteroid or volcanoes. In 2010, an international panel of experts in geology, paleontology and other related fields reviewed the data and declared their consensus. They sided with the asteroid theory, based on the research and data collected by Alvarez and his son.



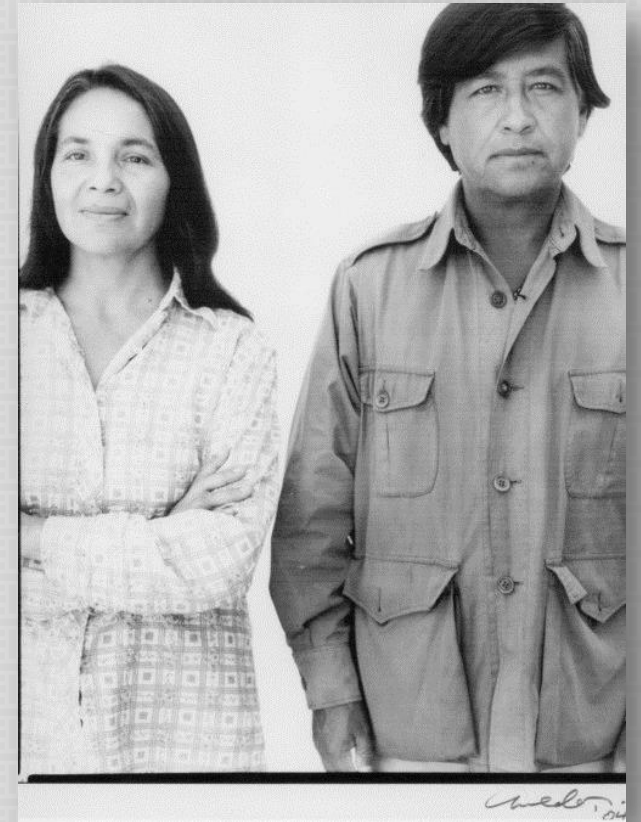
In April 2016, Alvarez's work indirectly inspired funding of a scientific expedition to excavate samples from the base of the Chicxulub crater off the coast of the Yucatán Peninsula in Mexico—the site of the asteroid's impact 65 million years ago.

Hispanic Heritage Month

While busy working on her own initiative to organize farm workers, Dolores Huerta met César E. Chávez—the Executive Director of the Stockton Community Service Organization. The duo quickly discovered that the vision of improving realities for farm workers was one that they shared.

Huerta said, “I couldn’t stand seeing kids come to class hungry and needing shoes. I thought I could do more by organizing farm workers than by trying to teach their hungry children.”

Dolores Huerta



Dolores Huerta and Cesar Chavez
Photo courtesy Dolores Huerta Foundation

Hispanic Heritage Month

In 1962, Huerta and Chávez launched the National Farm Workers Association. Huerta's organizing skills were essential to the growth of this budding organization. The challenges she faced as a woman did not go unnoted and, in one of her letters to Chávez, she joked, *“Being a now (ahem) experienced lobbyist, I am able to speak on a man-to-man basis with other lobbyists.”*

Among many other successes, she was instrumental in the enactment of the Agricultural Labor Relations Act of 1975. The first law of its kind in the United States, it granted farm workers in California the right to collectively organize and bargain for better wages and working conditions.

Hispanic Heritage Month

In 2012, Huerta was named one of 13 recipients of the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor, for her meritorious contributions to the United States.

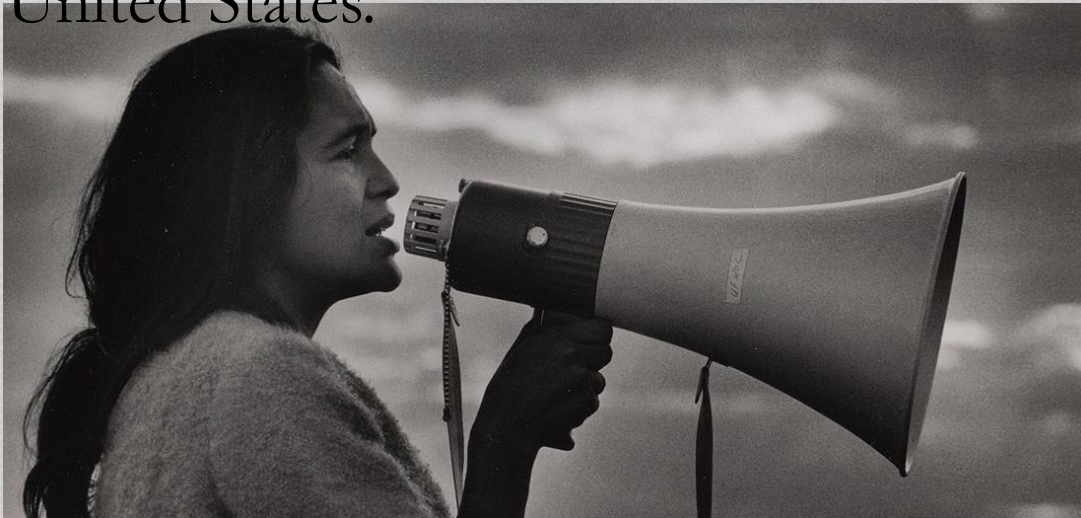


Photo courtesy Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery

“Every one of us has to make a commitment to social justice. You have to have the courage to get out there and fight for it.”

Huerta continued to work tirelessly, developing leaders and advocating for the working poor, women, and children until she died in May 2016.

Hispanic Heritage Month

Angela Salinas



Angela Salinas enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps when she was a sophomore in college. Throughout her 32 year career, she was promoted to various positions that had never been held by a woman.

She was the first woman to serve as a recruiting district command officer, where she oversaw the San Diego Marine Corps Recruit Depot facility and the training of all recruits west of the Mississippi River—about 20,000 a year.

Hispanic Heritage Month

On August 2, 2006, she became the first Hispanic woman to hold the rank of brigadier general.

When she retired in 2013, she earned the distinction as the longest serving woman in the history of the Marine Corps, the senior ranking woman, and the senior ranking Hispanic in the Corps.



Hispanic Heritage Month

As a young boy, Rascon traveled to the U.S. with his parents and quickly became fascinated by the military. At 17, he enlisted in the U.S. Army and became a medic in the 173rd Airborne Brigade. In March of 1966 in Vietnam, Rascon's unit fell under attack that he would later describe as “*ten minutes of hell.*”



Alfred Rascon

In the midst of the vicious firefight, “Doc” Rascon ran into the danger to tend to his wounded comrades. He pulled soldiers to safety, retrieved abandoned weapons, and shielded an injured sergeant from a grenade with his body. In spite of his own significant injuries, Rascon refused morphine so he could continue treating wounded soldiers.

Hispanic Heritage Month

Just days after his heroic actions, Rascon was nominated for the Medal of Honor. However, the written recommendation was lost and the brave medic wasn't formally recognized. Many years and additional military tours later, some of the men who owed their lives to Rascon heard that his recommendation for the medal was lost and went to the House Veterans Affairs Committee for action.



In 2000, Rascon was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor at a White House ceremony – with the men he had saved looking on. Rascon became the 343rd person awarded the nation's highest military honor.

Hispanic Heritage Month

Hispanics have exerted a profound influence on our country through their strong commitment to family, faith, hard work, and public service.

They have enhanced and shaped our national character with centuries-old traditions that reflect their multiethnic and multicultural customs.



Hispanic Heritage Month

“Latinos live America's core values of family and hard work. Instead of asking us to change our names and culture and to assimilate, Latinos should be saying, ‘You should become more like us.’ We espouse an America that lives up to its values. America is the best country in the world—but it cannot become a true world leader unless it embraces all its people.”

Raul Yzaguirre

President Emeritus

National Council of LaRaza

Sources

http://www.cemetery.state.tx.us/pub/user_form.asp?pers_id=11240

<http://newscenter.lbl.gov/2010/03/09/alvarez-theory-on-dinosaur/>

<http://www.womensmemorial.org/News/salinas.html>

<http://www.cmohs.org/recipient-detail/3397/rascon-alfred-v.php>

Prepared by the Defense Equal
Opportunity Management Institute,
Patrick Air Force Base, Florida
September 2016

Logan S. Young

All photographs are public domain and are from various sources as cited.

The findings in this report are not to be construed as an official DEOMI, U.S. military services, or the Department of Defense position, unless designated by other authorized documents.